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THE
ANSWER
UNTO THE
LETTER

Written to a

QUAKER

IN
NORFOLK.



L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by JOHN DARBY in *Bartholomew-Close*,
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T H E
A N S W E R
U N T O T H E
L E T T E R, &c.

F R I E N D !

THY Treatise concerning *Water-Baptism*, I have carefully perused, which, as thou informs me, is composed, to endeavour to rescue me out of the fatal error (as thou terms it) *I have long laboured under for the disuse of, being induced thereto by that occasion I gave thee of beginning a discourse with thee upon that Subject, and the disposition of mind I was in to declare, that could it be shewn Water-Baptism was necessary to Salvation, I should be willing to take it.* By which Expressions thou seems to make me the first Aggressor in this Controversy : but I think I need not remind thee what was the first Motive thereto, viz. Thy mentioning the Quakers wilful blindness, when thou treats some small matter on the subject of *Water-Baptism*, in thy printed manual of *Penitence and Im-penitence* ; which, hadst thou left out, and not meddled with, I question whether ever I should have began such Discourse with thee, which was wholly grounded thereon, and thou knows I made particular use of, as introductory thereto ; so that I cannot but think thou was the first cause of it. And seeing thou hast taken so much pains to endeavour to demonstrate, “ *That Water-*

A 2

“ *Baptism*

“ *Baptism is the Ordinance our Saviour, who came down from Heaven to instruct us in the Way thither, has appointed for one of the Means of Salvation, without which, according to the terms of the Gospel, we cannot ever enter into that Kingdom* ”—— Which high assertion not being apparently made out agreeable to my understanding (by the several Arguments thou hast used to support it) do therefore lay before thee in writing, the Reasons inducing me to that dissent ; which I think I cannot so fully do, but by distinctly going thro’ those parts of thy Treatise, wherein I apprehend the stress of thy Arguments lie.

First, I observe the Handle thou makes of outward Sacrifices and Offerings Mankind were in the Practice of from the Beginning, according to the Account we have of them in the holy Scripture ; which, thou sayst, “ *The all-wise Creator had revealed and appointed, whereby he expected fallen Man should approach, and reconcile themselves to him, in order to obtain his Favour here in this, and an happy Station in another World ; and calls them the first Method God appointed for the Recovery of fallen Man.* ” The which great stress I no where find the holy Scriptures mention, that the Almighty placed to them ; who having shewn them the way they should be saved, *viz.* by the Seed of the Woman breaking the Serpent’s Head ; which by Faith therein, working their Hearts in conformity thereto, he was pleased to extend, not being limitable to circumscribed outward Rules or Methods that we read of : Which, I think, is plainly manifest in the particular Cases of *Cain* and *Abel* (which thou hast mentioned ;) the Almighty regarding the inward disposition and frame of the Mind, which being first of all corrupted, so must in the first place be brought into right order ; without which then, God would not be pleased to manifest his Token of Acceptance of *Abel*. So likewise thro’ the several Generations in those early Days, his Salvation to them was not attainable on any other bottom, but as that of *Abel*’s (whatever their manner or custom of approaching to, or coming before him, as to the outward, might be ;) and likewise successively to this Day, and will continue so thro’out all Generations yet to come. Thy mentioning Circumcision, and those several Washings or Baptisms
which

which were in Use amongst the *Jews*, do not affect this particular Case, they being peculiarly adapted and suitable to that shadowy typical Dispensation which gave way and ceased, in point of Obligation, when Christ, their great Anti-type and Substance, did appear and was offer'd up; who, as the Apostle says, *blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross*, Coloss. ii. 14. also Ephes. ii. 13, 14, 15, 16. *But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ. For he is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition between us; having abolished in his Flesh the Enmity, even the law of Commandments, contained in Ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making Peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the Cross, having slain the Enmity thereby.*

Thy first great Stress on the Necessity of it runs in these Words: " But to put it without Doubt, our Saviour himself owned Baptism as a righteous Ordinance and Institution. For when St. John Baptist refused to baptize him, Christ argued with him from the Fitness and Necessity of the Action: for as he was to be an Example to all others, he said it was his Duty to own every divine Institution, and to shew his Readiness to comply with all righteous Injunctions, Suffer it to be so now, (let me be baptized by thee) for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness, Mat. iii. 15. The Word *Us* in this Place must mean *Me*, and all the People of God. Nay, afterwards, when there was to be no more distinction between the Children of Abraham, and no one Land more particulariz'd than another; but of every Land or Nation, he that feared God and worked righteousness, was to be accepted of him, he took away Circumcision, the Badge of Appropriation and Seal of Singularity, and commanded Baptism to be settled in its room, as the initiating Rite, or Entrance into his Church, and the Door of Salvation."

Answer. I know not any amongst us who ever denied the Baptism of *John* to be a righteous Ordinance and Institution (as well as all other Rites and Observations which *Moses* received from God upon Mount *Sinai*, and delivered

delivered to the People to be observed in their Generations,) it being very plain, *John* had a special Commission from God to exercise it. But that the Compliance of Christ therewith, did perpetuate and enforce it ever afterwards to be used in the Church, we have always contended against. The Reason of which Compliance seems to be very plain : That as *John* was sent beforehand to preach Repentance and Remission of Sins thro' the Power and Operation of the Holy Spirit, which he significantly calls *the Axe laid to the Root of every Tree*, (pointing out Christ just at hand, the great Author thereof) and did use the Form of Washing or Baptizing the People receiving his Doctrine ; which our blessed Saviour knowing to be as well a necessary Duty to them who were born under the Law, as Circumcision, &c. which he had submitted to before, was not pleased to take upon him his outward and publick Ministry to the People, till he had as well complied with this part as the other. Which Mystery *John* not being apprized of before, (having it only reveal'd to him, *Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost*, *John*. i. 33.) submissively said, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ?* But the Lord knowing his great Design and Purpose thereby, bids him to do it : *Suffer it to be so NOW, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness*. Which Act thou inferst to be an Example and Pattern for all People afterwards to do the like ; and that the Word US, must mean me and all the People of God. Which Exposition seems repugnant to the plain Sense of the Text. We don't read of any being present, to whom this Affair related, but our Saviour and *John*, when this Act was done ; and his Speech referred only to them both, on that particular Occasion : the word Now plainly manifesting that our Lord did not intend it as a standing Rule and Practice afterwards, in his more excellent glorious Dispensation. For no sooner was *John* obedient to this his great Master's Command, but he fulfill'd the Tenour of his Mission ; seeing all the outward Types and Shadows under the Law did point unto, and were fulfill'd *in him*. And the words Thus and Fulfil, plainly show that very act of theirs compleated the

Righteousness

Righteousness thereof, respecting the End and Design of it, being now near at an End, and to give place to his more excellent and glorious Dispensation. Nor could it have any particular reference to any subsequent Acts of God's People, because of the word *Us* ; it being clearly manifest that it related to them *Two*, only in their particular Duties, (if it may be lawful so to term it.) The latter part of that Paragraph thou makes a positive Assertion, That he took away Circumcision, and commanded Baptism to be settled in its room, &c. which I shall answer in its due place, thinking it not regular now ; because thou mentions some Passages which happen'd before Christ was offer'd up, and prior to that Commission in *Mat. 28.* shall first speak to them, which will bring me back again to the other. Therefore shall begin with thy Assertion, Christ did practise it, and for Proof cites *John 3. 26.* "*It is written they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest Witness, behold the same baptizeth, (by his Disciples) and all Men come to him. This Baptism must be with Water ; because the Holy Ghost was not yet given till the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ, Acts 2. It is said, the Pharisees heard that Jesus made, and baptized more Disciples than John, John 4. 1. How could the Pharisees hear of it, if it was not an outward and visible Baptism ? and since it was outward, it must be Water-Baptism, for there was no other.*"

Ans. It is granted, That Christ did permit, we don't read command, his Disciples to baptize with Water ; but that he himself, in his own Person, did so baptize, the Text expressly mentions in the Negative, *John 4. 2. (Tho Jesus himself baptized not, but his Disciples)* Let it be considered, he not only complied with, but also commanded several external Performances belonging to the legal Dispensation, which ceased in point of obligation after his Ascension, which carry with them as great a force of authority, and more (having his Commission) than this permissive passive Act, and are not thought permanent thereby, by the most earnest Contenders for Water-Baptism. And this Act of his Disciples seems to be at their first entrance, and taking upon them that Character : And we
read

read several of *John's* Disciples became Followers of *Jesus*, on his Testimony, and calling him *the Lamb of God, who taketh away the Sins of the World*, *John* 1. 36, 37. and therefore no marvel they went on in their former course of Baptizing for a time, which they seem'd to be discountenanc'd in by our Blessed Lord himself, who, when he knew the *Pharisees* heard of it, he departed from *Judea*, and went again into *Galilee*, *John* 4. 3. And we don't read this Baptism of these Disciples was distinguished from the Baptism of *John*, by being called the Baptism of Christ. The Text setting it in a true light, when occasionally mentioning the latter, bespeaks it as yet not taking place, but as what was to succeed, and that not till after the Resurrection of Christ.

Thy next Position, (as being before that general Commission in *Mat.* 28.) "*God has commanded us to be baptized with Water, as the means of Salvation; and brings for proof the Saying of our Saviour to Nicodemus, Except a Man be born of Water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, John* 3. 5. *which plainly shows, that Baptizing, or washing with Water, must be done before we can have an hope of Entrance, or Admittance into the Kingdom of God. You may observe Christ reprimanded Nicodemus, who was a Master of Israel, a Teacher and Expounder of the Law, one also of the great Council, that he did not apprehend what every ordinary Jew might well understand, viz. That they themselves made Proselytes, by washing them with Water, and then counted them new-born Persons.*"

Answer. It was the great Wisdom and Goodness of our Saviour to adapt his Speeches to the People with common familiar explanatory Words and Phrases, to reach their low and mean Capacities, in order to illustrate and imprint his Doctrine the more upon their Minds, which had always a spiritual saving Tendency in it, as in this particular grand Affair of being born again, and entering into the Kingdom of God. Tho he mentioned Water and the Spirit, yet I cannot understand he meant material elementary Water, but spiritual Water; which he not only speaks of there, but in many other Places, as *John* 7. 38, 39. *Jesus stood and cried, He that believeth on me, as the Scriptures have said, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers*

Rivers of living Water. But this spake he of the Spirit ; which they that believed on him should receive. He tells the Woman of Samaria of living Water, and of a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life, John 4. 10 to 15. So that it is a frequent Term or Speech our Blessed Lord used, to demonstrate the purifying, cleansing Nature of the Spirit by, to which he always ascribe that so great essential Work. It is the Spirit, says he, that quickneth ; the Flesh profiteth nothing. The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life, John 6. 63. which he deliver'd on a particular Occasion, when he had told them, Except they eat his Flesh, and drank his Blood, they had no Life in them ; as may be read in same Chapter, from ver. 48 to 63. Their Capacities was so low and weak, as to think he meant his outward Flesh and outward Blood ; and therefore many of his Disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard Saying, who can bear it ? And as his foregoing Words to them make appear, he intended no other than an inward and spiritual Application ; so now in this particular Discourse with Nicodemus, directly points to the same thing, by adding these Words : That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but can'st not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Which I think are as plain as Words can express, that our Lord meant the inward Water and Purification of the Spirit, and not outward elementary Water, as thou would'st infer. The Marginal Note on that Passage in the old Bible, printed in 1600. explains it in these Words, viz. which is the spiritual Water, where the Holy Ghost doth wash us into Newness of Life. So likewise Wilson, in his Christian Dictionary, Verbo Water, gives the meaning of Water in this Place, John 3. 5. to be the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, cleansing the Soul as Water doth the Body. I have read, that formerly the Papists made the same Objection against the Protestants, in reference to this Text, as now the Pleaders for the necessity of Water-Baptism do against the Quakers. And they, viz. the Protestants, denied that Text

to mean material Water, but rather the purifying Grace of Christ.

I now return to those parts of thy Discourse where I broke off. Thou asserts, "*He took away Circumcision, and commanded Baptism to be settled in its room, as the initiating Rite, or Entrance into his Church, and the Door of Salvation.*" Thy next Paragraph thereupon is, "*Jesus came and spake unto them (his Disciples) saying, All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo I am with you always, even unto the End of the World, Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20.*" Thou then starts our Objection, "*That the Baptism here mentioned, is not Water-Baptism, but the Baptism of the Spirit or Holy Ghost. But I hope (thou say'st) to make it plain to you, that it was not the Baptism of the Spirit or Holy Ghost, but Water-Baptism; and that Water-Baptism is the initiating Rite, by which all true Believers ought to enter into the Church of Christ, and is made and appointed as the Means of Salvation. The Baptism commanded Mat. 28. was not Baptism by the Holy Ghost, because thou say'st to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, signifies to be endued with the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; which Gifts were twofold, Ordinary and Extraordinary. The ordinary are all those Helps and Assistances which are necessary for the performance of those Conditions upon which our Salvation depends, partly by illuminating our Understandings in our sincere and diligent Inquiries after Divine Truth, and partly by exciting our Wills to that which is good, and strengthening our vigorous Endeavours in the prosecution of it. The extraordinary are those whereby we are enabled to perform (not necessary and standing Duties, but) Wonders and Miracles, in order (not to our own Salvation, but) the Benefit and Advantage of others. Pray observe the difference between these two: A Man cannot be just, temperate, chaste, &c. without the ordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the Communication of God's Spirit; but he may practise all those Graces*" of

“ of Justice, Temperance, Chastity, &c. without the
 “ extraordinary Gifts or Communication of God’s Spirit,
 “ whereby the Apostles and Primitive Christians were
 “ enabled to raise the Dead, speak with Tongues, heal
 “ the Sick, and do other Miracles. So that every good
 “ Christian may receive the Holy Ghost in an ordinary,
 “ but not in an extraordinary way. For the Baptism
 “ of the Holy Ghost, which in Scripture always signifies
 “ the being endued with his extraordinary Gifts, is now
 “ wholly ceased, and the ordinary Communication of
 “ God’s Spirit only remains. Therefore it must be plain
 “ to any impartial Judge, that since the Baptism of the
 “ Holy Ghost is long ago ceased, the Baptism commanded
 “ in Mat. 28. which is still practised, and will continue
 “ to the end of the World, was Water-Baptism.”

Answer. I acknowledge that the Baptism of the Spirit, or Holy Ghost, is the extraordinary Gift and pouring forth of the Holy Ghost, to the Salvation of all those who truly believe in, and obey it: But that it is confineable to working outward Miracles, as raising the Dead, healing the Sick, speaking with Tongues, &c. I cannot but dissent from, it seeming to me an Abridgment to God’s supreme, almighty, over-ruling Power and Prerogative, and repugnant to holy Scripture, which all along declares it to be an inward and spiritual Act, proceeding from the Spirit or Holy Ghost upon the Heart, and no where calls the outward Causes or Effects (which, upon any Emergency whatever, the Lord is pleased to appoint attending thereof) its Baptism, or saving Nature. It is true, it pleased the all-wise God then (when it, viz. the Holy Ghost, fell so extraordinarily upon the Disciples, as mention’d in *Acts* 2.) to reach to, and convince the outward Senses and Understandings of that stubborn, prejudic’d Generation, who (in his unsearchable Wisdom, knew) would not be brought to believe in that most glorious Dispensation, (the Extensiveness of his Salvation to all Mankind thro’ Jesus Christ) without these extraordinary Signs and Miracles, accompanying its so powerfully breaking forth, and ushering in: Which being wonderfully propagated, and incessantly increasing, the Minds of People afterwards came so to be wrought upon, and brought into such good and tender Dispositions, as that they more readily embraced the Verity

of it, by virtue of that Effect it had upon their Hearts ; not depending or looking for those extraordinary outward Tokens, which, in the Beginning, many would not be brought into the belief of without. And this seems to be the Case now in a general way, which yet is no Argument of that Power, or the Effect, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost being ceased, (by which the other did subsist) it remaining unchangeable, *viz.* the inward and saving Work upon the Soul ; and was ever attended with divine and spiritual Signs and Wonders in all those who have rightly come under it ; no Age nor Century having ever passed over since then but have produced many true Testimony-bearers to the Truth of it, who could say, They knew the Dead raised, the Sick healed, speaking with new Tongues, &c. Which, tho a great Mystery, and hard to be borne, yet is as surely known and visible as those which reach the outward Senses ; which, (blessed be God) I doubt not, but many in this Age are likewise experimental Witnesses of. Or how can the Doctrine of the Church of *England* hold good, which calls it (*viz.* the Baptism of the Spirit) *a Death unto Sin*, and *a new Birth unto Righteousness* ? which is the Tenet generally embraced and acknowledged by most Professors of the Christian Religion ; whereby it is evident, they confess to its Duration and Continuance, without limiting outward Miracles so necessarily entail'd along with it, as not subsisting without them : a Doctrine, in my Opinion, too mean and sordid for any calling themselves Christians, either to imbibe or propagate ; being too great a restriction on him who is the incomprehensible Fountain of divine and sacred Mysteries, and reveal them to his People after what manner and way he pleases ; and who can call him to account, or say those things are ceased and put an end to, which he can command in a Moment of Time ? &c.

As then I cannot understand, that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is so distinguishable only by outward Miracles, &c. as thou hast represented ; so I cannot see why that Commission in *Mat.* 28. 18, 19, 20. have not a direct Tendency and Pointing to it, abstract from the outward Element of Water ; it being very plain, our Saviour often used the Word Baptism when he had no Reference to, or Intention of Water ; but only by way of Allusion

Allusion to the Nature or Tendency that Word bear, in the carrying on his great Work of Salvation : Which, I take, must be understood in this Commission. The baptizing there mention'd, seems to be no distinct or separate outward Act, but purely that Quality which was to go along with, and attend their Teaching ; which should have that Force and Virtue with it, as to bring or beget the ministr'd to, into the very Nature or Power of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; for his Name signifies his Power, as is evident from many Places in Scripture : And the *Greek Translation* (as I have been inform'd) renders this Passage *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*, that is, into the Name ; which shews, that those particular Words there mentioned by our Lord, was not intended as a direct Form for them to use, nor does it appear they made such use of them in their little Practice of Water-Baptism afterwards, and that their preaching had that Effect upon great Multitudes, (as is above-mention'd) the *Acts of the Apostles* in very many Places testify. And this Commission was of so high a Nature and Tendency, that they could not go about it, when and how they pleased ; but were commanded to wait at *Jerusalem* until they should receive the Holy Ghost, without which they could not put that Commission in execution, to be such powerful Preachers and Witnesses for Christ, not only in *Jerusalem* and all *Judea*, but even to the *uttermost parts of the Earth*, *Acts* 1. 8. And as it was not to take place till after Christ was offered up, it seems inconsistent with the Nature of his Dispensation, to injoin the Use of the shadowy, ceremonial Circumstances of the Law (which pointed unto, and was fulfilled in him) in the Propagation thereof, (of which Water-Baptism was not of the least Account.) And as therefore his own spiritual saving Baptism had took place, (before the Execution of this his great Command, by his Disciples) which he would have all Men, and that Generation especially, be Partakers of, it is no ways absurd or inconsistent to right Reason to say, He who had all Power both in Heaven and in Earth, gave them, *i. e.* his Disciples, Power to convey it where their powerful Ministry was received, as a sure and certain Token or Pledge of his sending them forth in that so great and mighty Work, who, for their Encouragement

ment therein, promised to be with them always, even unto the End of the World. And seeing there is no mention of Water in the Text, so I cannot find it is either intended or implied, without it can be made appear, the word Baptizing can never be fully answered in its full and extensive Signification, without literally confining it to outward material Water : the which, I conceive, is too hard and difficult matter for any to demonstrate ; being firmly assured, the same is as well and fully attain'd to in a spiritual, as carnal Sense. And therefore as thou wouldst enforce the Baptism intended in that Commission, is the Initiation, by which all true Believers ought to enter into the Church of Christ, and made and appointed as the Means of Salvation to continue to the End of the World ; so it appearing clear to my Understanding, that the Holy Ghost's Baptism is there intended : therefore that is the Baptism which is the Initiation into the true Church of Christ, and to continue to the End of the World.

Thy Assertion concerning our Saviour's taking away Circumcision, and commanded Baptism, *i. e.* with Water, in its room, have no Scripture-proof or Authority to support it, and therefore reject it as spurious.

Thou proceeds : “ *But let the following Observations sink deep in your Mind : Suppose you could have the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, they would be no hinderance to Water-Baptism, but rather a Qualification for receiving it. For it is plain upon St. Peter's preaching his Sermon, the Holy Ghost fell upon the Gentiles, who spoke with Tongues and magnified God. Whereupon Peter appealed to the People, whether this was not a clear Evidence that God intended these Men the Blessings of the Gospel-Covenant, and that, having the extraordinary Gifts, they might, and ought to be baptized with Water into the Christian Profession? Can any Man forbid Water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord, Acts 10. 47, 48.*”

Answer. I grant that Cornelius, &c. receiving the Holy Ghost, did qualify them to receive from Peter whatever he thought necessary to injoin them to, respecting their

their taking upon them the Christian Profession ; but that no ways enforce the Necessity of Water-Baptism now, to us *Gentiles*, because of its being administer'd to them, (if it was so) it appearing to be but an Act of Condescension in the Apostle *Peter*, to satisfy the Narrowness of his Brethrens Spirit (accompanying him :) which he knew, was not as yet favour'd with the like Degree of Understanding as he had been (tho but a little before) of the *Gentiles* being to be brought in, and partake of the like Advantage, by the Offering up of Christ, as well as they. Therefore to take away all Distrust out of their Minds (that he would not contemn or slight their received Tradition of using Water-Baptism to New Converts and Profelytes, being of late more in Use than heretofore, by the Appearance of *John* the Baptist, &c.) he propounded this Query to them, *Can any Man forbid Water?* &c. Which carries a Probability with it, of his not having it in his Commission (for then he must have preremptorily perform'd it himself, without making that Hesitation) which yet appears the more evidently so, in that he pass'd it off from doing it with his own Hands : and the Text is silent of his placing their Initiation into the Christian Church thereupon, they having largely partook of that before, whilst he powerfully preached the Gospel amongst them ; which doubtless sufficiently answer'd *Cornelius's* and his Household's Expectation in sending for him. But this particular Act of that Apostle, carries not that Strength and Force with it, (if Precedents of that Nature from him are insisted on as standing and binding Obligations,) viz. as his compelling the believing *Gentiles* to live as did the *Jews*, Gal. ii. 14. Which we now no ways insist on as obligatory to us.

Thy next Position is : “ *Nay, the Promise of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost are thro' Baptism: Be baptized, and ye shall receive the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, Acts 2. 38.*”

Answer. This seems contradictory to thy above Assertion, That they are not only received without it, and are no hinderance to, but rather a Qualification for the receiving of Water-Baptism. Both which to me favour too much of Superstition and Bigotry, rendering thereby the Substance too weak and insufficient of itself without the

the Sign or Shadow ; which Water-Baptism is generally acknowledged to be. I grant the Baptism there intended in *Acts* 2. 38. may be implied to be that of Water, which yet amounts to no more than this ; of *Peter's* and the rest being zealous for the outward ceremonial Points of the Law ; and therefore as these who seemed to be new Converts, and inquired what they should do, (being *Jews* by Descent) wanting to give Proof and Demonstration thereof, *Peter* recommends them to the Performance of that known ceremonious Rite and Custom, *viz.* Water-Baptism ; as a convincing Evidence of their being so in Reality, (it being a received Opinion, that it was necessary for Profelytes and Converts to comply with, at their first Admission.) But the Text is wholly silent of mentioning, that the Gifts of the Holy Ghost was conveyed by, or thro' the Means of that Water-Baptism ; or that those who were so baptized, did thereupon receive it, *viz.* the Holy Ghost ; or that its Manifestation was restricted thereto. All which, I conceive must first be made appear, before that Concession can be granted, That the Promise of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost are attained thro' Water-Baptism ; for the Promise is so copious, not only to that present Generation, but to their *Children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, *Acts* 2. 39.

Thy next Position is : "*Water-Baptism is the initiating Rite by which all true Believers must enter into the Church of Christ, and is made, constituted and appointed, as the Means of Salvation. The Church, thou sayst, is an outward and visible Society ; our Saviour calls it a City that is set on a Hill, Mat. 5. 14. And as it is so, has an outward and visible Form of admitting Men into it ; for otherwise it would not be known, or distinguished from the rest of Mankind ; as a River is lost in the Sea, because it is no longer distinguished from it, but goes to make up a Part of it.*"

Answer. Thou seems to confine the Church of Christ into a very narrow and small Compass, as not exceeding the Bounds and Limits but where Water-Baptism is administered ; which overturns that wholesome sound Doctrine of the Apostle *Peter's*, *I perceive of a Truth, that God is no respecter of Persons ; but in every Nation*

Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him, Acts 10. 34, 35. Also Rev. 3. 20. Behold, I stand at the Door and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me; and many other plain Testimonies of Scripture, which points forth the true Church or People of God, not always distinguishable to an outward Conformity or visible Society of People. Then consequently not subsisting by that Form or Ceremony of outward Baptism, as not being initiated into it thereby; nothing being more certain, than great Multitudes true Members thereof, (according to, Peter's Doctrine, as above) who never heard of, much less practised, that outward Form; being, in my Judgment, great Ignorance, if not worse, to hold forth the contrary, and argue against its Visibilty without the Use of it.

I shall now examine those Instances thou brings of some being baptized with Water, and see how far they will hold in making good thy strenuous Assertions for the Necessity of it. Thou goes on: "*When Christ sent his Apostles to convert all Nations, his Commission was to baptize them: Go teach all Nations, baptizing them, Mat. 28. 19. that is, baptizing all who shall receive your Word. Accordingly it is said, they that received the Word were baptized, Acts 2. 41. pursuant to what the Apostle had preached to them, ver. 38. Repent and be baptized. And we find it the constant Custom to baptize all those that were converted to the Faith. Thus Paul, tho miraculously converted from Heaven, was commanded to be baptized, Acts 22. 16. He baptized Lydia, and the Saylor, and their Households, as soon as he converted them, Acts 16. 15, 33. and the Corinthians, Acts 18. 8. and the Disciples of John, who had not yet been made Christians, Acts 19. 5. Philip baptized the Eunuch as soon as he believed in Christ; they went down into the Water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him, Acts 8. 38. And Peter immediately upon the Conversion of Cornelius and those with him, said, Can any Man forbid Water, that these should not be baptized? Acts 10. 47. It was*"

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“ so well known to be the initiating Rite into the Christian Church, that whoever became a Convert, whether Jew or Gentile, immediately required Water-Baptism. After these Instances, thou mentions our Saviour practising it, which I have spoken to before ; thou then only brings the same Instances over again, and sums up the Argument in these Words. The Argument from these places lies thus : The Apostles did practise that Baptism which Christ commanded ; Mat. 28. But the Apostles did practise Water-Baptism ; therefore Water-Baptism was that Baptism which Christ commanded.”

Answer. I no where find that the holy Scriptures make mention, that the Apostles in recommending Water-Baptism, did do it by Virtue of that Commission, Mat. 28. or that they understood it was implied thereby ; or that they took those express Words, viz. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, there mentioned, to be laid down as a Form for them to use ; which does not appear by any of the Instances thou hast brought.

The first thou mentions, Acts 2. 41. is the Form of John's Baptism, viz. Repent and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the Remission of Sins. And it is mentioned in Mark 1. 14. Luke 3. 3. That John preached the Baptism of Repentance, for the Remission of Sins ; and is supposed to have used the Form of Speech in the Name of Jesus Christ, in his Baptism : the End of which was, that he, viz. Christ, might be made manifest to Israel, John 1. 31. and always directed the People to him, and expressly tells them, the Law was given by Moses ; but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ, John 1. 17. So that, as he appears to be the first outward Instrument, preaching him to them under that Title, the Probability seems to have a good Bottom ; that he used to mention that Name in administering his Baptism, thereby raising the Expectations of the People after him to whom he pointed : the which afterwards continued as a Form and Custom, when Water-Baptism was administered.

We ought to consider the Infant State of the Christian Religion, whilst the Apostles allowed of and sometimes practised Water-Baptism, (which was for the most

most part to their own Brethren the *Jews* by descent, to whom they thought the Dispensation of the Gospel was as peculiarly to belong, as that of the Law given by *Moses*) and therefore what they chiefly did respecting Water-Baptism, &c. was, whilst this Veil was yet over their Hearts, not seeing at first to the End of those Ceremonies and Observations, which went along with, and were annexed to their legal Dispensation. So that they not only used this of Water-Baptism for a time, but also many other of their accustomed Rites and Ceremonies, *viz.* Circumcision, Purifications, anointing of the Sick, Vows, Shavings, Washing of the Feet, &c. And we find that afterwards, when they saw thro' the Weakness and Unprofitableness of these shadowy typical Observations, being fully persuaded the Partition-Wall was broken down (by the offering up of Christ upon the Cross,) *viz.* the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances, and that God had also to the *Gentiles* granted Repentance unto Life; yet were they always cautious how they acted to, and amongst the *Jewish* Converts, knowing they were not to be broke off all at once from their received Opinions of Rites and Ceremonies, &c. which is very obvious from what the Elders said to *Paul*: "*Thou seest, Brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the Law, and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are amongst the Gentiles to forsake Moses; saying, that they ought not to circumcise their Children, neither to walk after the Customs. What is it therefore? the Multitude must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this, that we say to thee, We have four Men which have a Vow on them, them take and purify thyself with them; and be at Charges with them, that they may shave their Heads, and all may know, that those things whereof they are informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself walkest orderly, and keepest the Law, Acts 21. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.*"

From which it seems plain, they complied to several things respecting the Customs and Observations of the Law, purely by way of Condescension to the low and

weak Capacities of the People in the Morning of Christianity, and not from any Command from God binding them thereto.

Thy second Instance, *viz.* *Paul's* being commanded to be Baptized, does not appear clear for thy Purpose ; the Baptism there intended, being such as could wash away Sin (an Effect that of Water never could accomplish,) as is evident from the following Words of *Ananias*, *Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy Sins, calling on the Name of the Lord* ; or, as the old Translation have it, In calling on the Name of the Lord ; which Baptism being that of the Spirit (as I understand it) was instrumentally conveyed to him thro' *Ananias* ; as we may read *Acts* 9. 17, 18. *And Ananias went his way, and entred into the House ; and putting his Hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me, that thou mightst receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his Eyes as it had been Scales ; and he received his Sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.* But suppose it should be granted, that Water, tho not here mentioned, was the real thing *Paul* was baptized into, it yet amounts to no more than what has been already spoken to concerning the Elders, &c. being zealous of the Law. And we read particularly of this *Ananias*, *Acts* 22. 12. That he was a devout Man according to the Law, having a good Report of all the *Jews* that dwelt there. As to those Instances of *Lydia*, the Jailor, and the *Corinthians* ; it does not appear, that the Apostle *Paul*, who was instrumental in their Conversion, either recommended them to be baptized, or performed that Act upon them himself, albeit it is granted he sometimes did use it. And he ; who was no ways inferior to any of the Apostles, and had the Mind of Christ, and understood it as fully as any of them all, positively declares, that Christ sent him *not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel*, *1 Cor.* 1. 17. and in the two preceding Verses mentions whom he did baptize in these Words : *I thank God I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius ; and I baptized also the Household of*

of Stephanus : *besides*, (says he) *I know not that I baptized any other*. Then surely he did not baptize *Lydia*, the Jailor, and the *Corinthians*, as thou hast mentioned he did ; for he best knew what he had done, who positively says, *I know not that I baptized any other*. So that by his own Confession, it appears he did not baptize, *i. e.* with Water, the Disciples of *John* ; which thou hast also placed as his Act, for then he would have been inconsistent with himself (the Text mentioning their Number to be Twelve) in asserting so positively that he knew not that he had baptized any other. But as Water is not there mentioned that those Disciples was baptized into, so, I think, from the above Observation, there is good Grounds to believe that outward Act, at that time, was not performed upon them, by him, altho the Gift of the Holy Ghost was undoubtedly convey'd instrumentally thro' him, to their unspeakable Benefit and Advantage, being then capable to know (what their Water-Baptism could never do for them) and savingly partook of the Holy Ghost ; which they were ignorant of before.

Thy next Instance is that of *Philip's* baptizing the Eunuch ; which Act, and that of the Apostle *Paul's* concerning *Crispus*, &c. are the only two plain Facts that we read of, that any of the Apostles did really do with their own Hands. As to that of *Philip's*, it was purely an Act of Condescension ; he neither recommended it, nor used any Arguments to enforce the necessity of it : but, on the other hand, as he had been preaching Jesus to him, pressed the Eunuch to believe on him with his whole Heart, (as most necessary and conducive to his Salvation) and only said, *Thou may'st* ; which plainly implies, that he thought it a very indifferent thing ; far from laying that stress upon it, as the initiating Rite, by which all true Believers must enter into the Church of Christ, and made, constituted, and appointed as the Means of Salvation : which, had he so thought, it follows, as a necessary Consequent, he would have spoken in quite a different way and manner ; as that thou Must, for without it thou can't have no hope of Salvation. It appears likewise to my Understanding,

standing, as tho the Apostle *Paul* not only held it as an indifferent, insufficient thing of itself, but administer'd it as such, in that he thanked God he had done so little of it ; which had it been of so high a Nature and Concern as thou hast asserted thro'out thy whole Treatise, he must always have perform'd it on all those he was made instrumental to embrace and take upon them the Profession of the Christian Religion, which were many Thousands, as appears by the Accounts we have of his Travels and unwearied Labours in that Service. But it appears plainly to the contrary, by his own corroborating indisputable Testimony ; the which evidently shews, that what little he did do of that kind, was but voluntary, and not binding upon him by virtue of that Commission, in *Mat. 28*. As to the Case of *Cornelius*, I have spoken to it before. From all which Places it does not appear, that there is either that great stress laid upon it, (as thou hast laid down) or that they, *viz.* the Apostles, (in their little Practice of it) press'd it as such, or did do it thro' a necessity from the said Commission ; which I take to be of another Nature and Tendency, *viz.* the instrumental conveying of the Holy Ghost, with its saving Baptism ; which, whilst they were truly exercised in their Ministry and Teaching, their Hearers largely partook of, and were favour'd with : Of which blessed excellent Effects we have several Instances in the Acts of the Apostles, that not only *Jews*, but also *Gentiles* reaped thereby, which was what their being baptized into Water could never effect ; being so far from that, that we read of several who, altho they were so baptized, yet neither knew or heard that the Holy Ghost was given, much less partook of it thereby : which afterwards they largely witness'd, when they were favour'd with that of the Spirit, thro' the powerful Preaching of the Apostles. So that I cannot but think that was the only Baptism our blessed Lord intended in that Commission in *Mat. 28*. and see no Reason to fall in with the stress of thy Argument, That because the Apostles used Water-Baptism, therefore that was the Baptism there intended : And I am of opinion, that from what the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, *viz.* *Paul*, declared in this Case, the following Conclusion may

may very well be drawn, and received as Orthodox, viz. That which he positively affirms in the Negative, he had not in his Commission to exercise, could not be deemed the Command of Christ. But he said, *Christ sent him not to baptize, i. e. with Water.* Therefore Water-Baptism is not the Command of Christ.

Thy next Plea is Antiquity: "*And the Catholick Church after them to this day, saying, The publick Nature of Water-Baptism being an outward matter of Fact, of which Mens outward Senses are Judges, it is impossible for the World to be imposed upon; nor ever can it be, in such a publick matter of Fact.*"

Answer. This Observation seems not to affect the Case now in debate, which is not whether Water-Baptism has been in use and practis'd in the visible Churches, but how far it have a divine Commission and Authority to support it. And I think nothing can be more notorious, than the World being imposed upon in respect to the Manner and Custom of administering Water-Baptism, which, as now generally received, and in Practice, seems repugnant not only to Scripture-Precedent and Proof, but also to its proper Signification.

Thou goes on, "*As the Practice of the Apostles is a most sure Rule to understand the meaning of that Command they put in execution; so the Practice of those, who immediately succeeded the Apostles, who were Contemporaries with them, and learned the Faith from their Mouths, is as certain a Rule to know what the Practice, and what the Sense of the Apostles were.*"

Answer. Seeing it is not proved, that the Practice of the Apostles, in using Water-Baptism, was done by virtue of a Commission they received for that Purpose; I cannot therefore allow, that their Compliance therewith, can be called a putting in execution a Command which does not appear: but if Practice be deemed so necessary a Consequent thereof, then will it hold as well for Circumcision, &c. as this of Water-Baptism; it being very plain, that those who were Contemporaries with them, and immediately succeeded them, did as well practise the one as the other, having the same Handle for them both, viz. the Practice of the Apostles.

And

And Church-History gives us an Account, that Circumcision continued in the Christian Church for the space of 138 Years; and was approved of so generally, that *Eusebius* mentions fifteen Bishops all of the Circumcision.

Thou proceeds, shewing, “ *That one Age does not go off the Stage of the World all at once; and that it was morally impossible to deceive us, in what has been the universal and received Practice of all Ages up to the Apostles: And sums it up in these Words. All History of the several Ages confirm the Truth of it; and no one can imagine, but that if Water-Baptism was an human Invention, or superstitiously either obtruded or continued in the Church, some one would be found in less than 1600 Years to have open’d his Mouth against it, when Thousands sacrificed their Lives for Matters of much less Importance.*”

Answer. A long continued received Opinion and Practice is no proof of divine Institution: For nothing is more obvious than the great Apostasy which overspread the visible Churches, almost from the Days of the Apostles down to the Reformation; I mean that of *Luther, Calvin, Wickliffe, &c.* whereby many gross Errors were brought in and cherish’d, and became as Articles of Faith, &c. and traditionally received as Orthodox, and agreeable to Scripture; many of which they faithfully testify’d against, according to that degree of Light and Knowledge they were favour’d with. So likewise since then, many have been raised up (who having clearer Discernings in several particular Points respecting the Brightness and Glory of the Christian Religion) to withstand and oppose some material things, which in that early day they did not so perfectly see thro’; which we, in this Age, reap great Advantage by. But if we must shut our Hearts from believing in that which appears in a clearer Light to us now than many of our Ancestors could comprehend, what benefit shall we reap by that Light and Knowledge it have pleased God to bestow upon us, if we do not exercise it in those things so essentially necessary to our own Good; which, according to thy arguing, we ought not, but to receive and believe, and take for Truth and Orthodox, the received Opinions
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and Traditions of others ? The which Handle the Papists make great use of, to prove not only the Infallibility of the Pope, but their continuing in their several Superstitions and Absurdities, they having that of Antiquity and Practice on their sides : which, as Protestants in their Answers to them on that Head have very justly rejected, as too mean and worthless Foundation for true Christianity to be built upon, so likewise I do reject it as such ; and shall, according to my Judgment, keep to the Sense of the Holy Scriptures concerning this Matter now in Controversy. Tho I cannot but take notice of thy Insinuation, as tho none, in the space of 1600 Years, had open'd their Mouths against it. I have read, that in the Year 1022. in the City of *Orleans*, near fourteen of that City of the chief of their Clergy, and the more noble of their Laicks, were burnt alive, by order of the King, because they did stiffly deny the Grace of that called Holy Baptism, and also the Consecration of the Lord's Body and Blood. And tho it may be objected, they were looked upon and dealt with as Hereticks, so was *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Wickliffe*, &c. counted ; and all the Protestants are so deemed, by the lump, to this day. Many of the Martyrs, in later Years, testify'd against the Sprinkling of Infants, and deny'd that Baptism had any relation unto them.

Thy next Position is, which now in course comes under Consideration, "*The washing of Water upon the outward, gives us a Title, and is the means of conveying the Sanctification of the Spirit in the inward Man ; which effects a new and spiritual Birth upon all those, who being duly disposed, receive the Rite.*" To support which, thou urges the Words of Christ after his Resurrection : "*He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved*, Mark 16. 16. What Words can be plainer ? Baptism is here joined with Faith itself, as necessary to Salvation. He that receiveth, and embraceth the Gospel, and thereupon becomes a Profelyte and Disciple of Christ, and receives Baptism, the Seal of the new Covenant, shall, for all his former Sins, receive Pardon ; and, upon his Perseverance, obtain eternal Life. Oh glorious Promise ! Oh blessed Means ! who can refuse it !"

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Answer.

Answer. The Baptism here spoken of, is the same with that Commission in *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. tho not expressly mentioned in the same Words, and seems very easy to be understood what Baptism our Lord intended, *viz.* that of the Spirit, because of the efficacious Property and Nature of it, always attending, and inseparably joined with, its great Antecedent, *viz.* true and saving Faith; without which we are never capable to attain unto Salvation. And as the Words of our Lord are positive, and laid down in an unlimited Sense, it cannot hold good as to the outward Part and Matter of Water-Baptism, nothing being more visible, than that such a State as Salvation not attainable thereby, or that such Causes attends it, as bespeaks it (in general) a Consequent of true and saving Faith; innumerable Instances of which we have in this Age, as well as several Instances recorded in Scripture: And therefore, as the Text have thus link'd them together, under such copious, extensive Expressions, wherein not any are excluded, I see no room to support that Suggestion of Water-Baptism, either implied or intended thereby, or of its being the Means of conveying the Sanctification of the Spirit in the inward Man; which Effect, we find, it was not only insufficient in the days of the Apostles to perfect, for that a great many, after they were said to have believed, and were baptized with Water, yet were ignorant of a State of Salvation, and did not attain to it till they came under that of the Spirit; so likewise down thro' the several Ages to this day, the same Weakness, as well as Unprofitableness, goes along therewith: And therefore thy breaking forth in such high Epithets upon it, as *Oh, blessed Means! Oh glorious Promise! who can refuse it!* ought wholly to be ascribed and spoken of the true and saving Faith, with its Effect; the Baptism of the Holy Ghost being manifestly so, and not the other.

Thou goes on with a positive Assertion, "*The Apostles exhorted all their Converts to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, that they might receive Salvation from him by that means; as we read at large in the Acts of the Apostles.*"

Answer.

Answer. I cannot form any such Inference from any recited Passage in that Book, or any other in their several Epistles to the Churches; or that whenever they did do it, they placed it as the means of Salvation by Jesus Christ thereupon. Shall examine those Passages out of their Epistles thou hast made use of, inferring the same.

Thou say'st, "*St. Paul tells us, that Christ loved his Church, and deliver'd himself for it, that he might sanctify it, purging it with the washing of Water, Eph. 5. 26. meaning that Baptism entitles us to the Graces of the Spirit, to purge away the guilt and defilement of Sin; without which they both lie upon us, and leave us in the gall of Bitterness, and bond of Iniquity. And such, (saith he, to the Corinthians) were some of you, till you were washed (in the Water of Baptism) justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Which great Blessings of Justification and Sanctification, are first and chiefly derived on us in our Baptism.*"

Answer. Thy leaving out these following Words, by the Word, in that of Eph. 5. 26. shows thy being pinched with it: For that it fully explains the meaning of the Apostle in that Place, ascribing the Work of Sanctification and Washing to the Power of the Word; and what that effects (and not what is outwardly perform'd or done by Men) which is an inward and spiritual Washing and Purification, according to its Nature and Property, as it appears in the Heart, and is very fully testified in many Places of Scripture: as *John 15. 3. Now ye are clean thro' the Word which I have spoken unto you. Chap. 17. 17. Sanctify thou them thro' thy Truth; thy Word is Truth. 1 Pet. 1. 22, 23. Seeing you have purified your Hearts in obeying the Truth, thro' the Spirit, unto unfeigned Love of the Brethren; see that you love one another with a pure Heart, fervently. Being born again, not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible; by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. Ver. 25. But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever: And this is the Word which, by the Gospel, is preached unto*
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you.

you. James 1. 21. *Receive, with Meekness, the ingrafted Word, which is able to save your Souls.* These, with many more Texts, set forth the saving, purifying Work and Power of the Word, no reference being in the least made to outward, elementary Means, as Water, &c. as necessary thereto; the which the Apostle very clearly sets forth in this Passage in *Ephesians*, in his following Words, ver. 27. *That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.* All which apparently shows, he had no intention of outward Water, but only used that Word in its familiar, extensive Sense and Application, as the Produce and Effect of the Word, which is like Water washing and purifying, wherever its saving Power is known; but to take it in an outward and carnal Sense, as thou would have it understood, is not only doing great Violence to the Text, but an impeaching the Sufficiency of the Word, in compleating the Work of Sanctification for his Church, but by that Element which is inconsistent with the whole Tenour and Doctrine, contained both in the Old and New Testament. That also in the 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. is of the like spiritual Tendency and Application, the Apostle only reminding them of the great unspeakable Mercy and Advantage some of that Church had partook of, by being redeemed from those gross Enormities (he there enumerates, which, without doubt, had got too much Entrance amongst them; and if any continued in, they should not inherit the Kingdom of God) which he wholly ascribes to the sanctifying, justifying Nature of the Spirit, in the Name of the Lord Jesus; or by the Power and Virtue which attends that his one great Offering for the Sins of the whole World, which all, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who draw nigh unto him with a true Heart, in full assurance of Faith, will receive and partake of; as the Author to the *Hebrews* in that whole Book largely declares: Which he, who was supposed to be the Writer thereof, very fully and plainly testifies concerning the great Power of Faith in that one great Offering, and the Benefit attending it, to the being thorowly sanctified and justified

tified thereby, does also, in the like manner, in this particular Passage to the *Corinthians*, refer to the same thing, without any Intention or Implication (that I can understand) of any outward Act, as Water-Baptism going along with it; tho thou hast endeavour'd to make him say so in those express Terms, by putting in the Parenthesis, joining with his Expressions (in the Water of Baptism) and have alter'd the word But, and plac'd Till in its room, because of the greater force of argument attending that than the other; which, however, have not served thy Purpose: And it remains no doubt with me, but he directly pointed to the inward, purifying, cleansing Nature of the Spirit in that Text, without any regard to Water as prior thereto; he having before that saw into its weakness and insufficiency, and declar'd to these People now writing to, that Christ sent him not to baptize therewith: which, of itself, is a plain Evidence he did not intend to pin their Faith any ways thereupon.

Thy next is the Saying of *Peter*, in his 1 *Epist.* 3. 21.
 “ That Baptism doth now save us; and says, thou
 “ knows our common Objection is from the following
 “ Words, not putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but
 “ the Answer of a good Conscience towards God. But
 “ thou say’st it must be Water-Baptism, or you cannot
 “ make Sense of the Apostle’s Words, or the Figure
 “ alluded unto by St. Peter; who says, the long-suffer-
 “ ing of God waited in the days of Noah, while the
 “ Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight
 “ Souls, were saved by Water. The like Figure, where-
 “ unto Baptism doth now save us; that is, as the
 “ Souls in the Ark were saved by Water, so now Water-
 “ Baptism doth also save us.”

Answer. The Apostle’s meaning is so easy to be understood, that there seems little need to say any thing more than himself have done to illustrate it, being so copious in his Expressions, as to guard against an Objection that might be made concerning the Baptism he there meant, by saying in the Negative what it was not, viz. the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, or Water-Baptism; and then in the Affirmative, in opposition to it, what it was, the Answer of a good Conscience

Conscience towards God, or the Baptism of the Spirit : So apt are some People to take things by a wrong Handle, however plain and clearly laid down, to make them serve their own Purpose, that they will strain and construe them in quite a different Sense, than what in truth and reality cannot be stood by and upheld ; as in this particular Text is very manifest. The Apostle in that Epistle declared to them the great Benefit reaped by the Sufferings of Christ, who, he tells them, *bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to Sin, should live unto Righteousness ; by whose Stripes ye were healed*, Chap. 2. 24. and representing the Work in the Heart, ascribes the Power alone to him, not taking in as assistant any outward Means of Water, or otherwise, that so their Faith might be wholly in him, abstract therefrom ; which his two Positions, both in the Negative and Affirmative before related, plainly make appear. The old Translation of that Text, called *Theodore Beza's*, out of the Greek, have it thus : *The Baptism that now is, answering that Figure, saveth us : Now that which answereth a Figure, is the thing figured, viz. the Substance ; for it is absurd to say any Figure is the Figure or Type of another Figure, and not of the Substance its Antitype.*

I perceive how strenuously thou argues on those words Not and But, and that “ *in Scripture-phrase they frequently signify not Only, but Also ; and brings several Instances thereof, as first that of Joseph : It was not you that sent me hither, but God*, Gen. 45. 8. “ *2dly, Whoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me*, Mark 9. 37. Again, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but him that sent me*, John 12. 44. Lastly, *Labour not for the Meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting Life*, John 6. 27. And thus thou say'st St. Peter's meaning is, *That the Baptism that now saves us, is not only that outward Baptism, or washing with Water, which is a putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but also the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.*”

Answer.

Answer. These Texts thou hast mentioned, do carry their own Sense and Meaning with them, something being directly implied, as necessarily depending, which is familiarly taken in by the Words Only and Also, whose Sense would be imperfect, and Doctrine unsound without them. But this Text sufficiently explains itself, it being very evident the Apostle intended two distinct and separate Baptisms, by the Words Not and But ; distinguishing them so clearly that he gives no room to join Only and Also with them, whose Sense is intire, as well as Doctrine very comprehensive and orthodox as it stands. And this same Apostle did, to the rest of his Brethren, give a clear Account of his making a separate Distinction betwixt Water-Baptism, and that of the Spirit or Holy Ghost, *Acts* 11. 15, 16. and we don't read that ever they were joined together or called one ; which will be spoken to hereafter. “ *And this, thou sayst, will be more evident, if you consider that the Baptism chiefly administred when this Text was recorded, was to the adult Persons at their full Age ; who were examined, and were to give a good Account of their Faith and Repentance, and actually promised, before the People, that they would lead good Lives for the future ; and so Baptism was said to save them, and doth now also us, not merely as it is the putting away the filth of the Flesh, but as it leads us to the Answer, or Stipulation, or Covenant of leading good Lives.*”

Answer. I agree with thee, that Baptism, when it was then administred, was to the Adult at their full Age, (which Concession of thine seems to overturn the darling Tradition of using it to Infants,) but cannot find that the Scripture mentions that particular Form and Method attending that Ceremony, which thou sayst was then in use ; nor can I find they lay any stress of Salvation in the Use of it, (any more than they did on Circumcision, &c.) or that they ever call it a Part of, or went along with, to make up the saving Baptism of Christ.

Thou proceeds, " *And lest any should mistake St. Peter, and apply Baptism, as those of your Persuasion do, to Works of Righteousness, St. Paul in his Epistle to Titus, told us, That the Mercy of God in the Gospel Revelation, was not by any Works of Righteousness ; but the receiving of Men into the happy Privileges of the Christian Covenant by Baptism, whereby they partook of the gracious Influences of the Holy Spirit attending their Admission into it. The Kindness and Love of God our Saviour towards Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done ; but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Titus 3. 4, 5. Which Words plainly set forth, not only the Benefits, but Necessity of Water-Baptism, in order to Regeneration, without which our Saviour tells us, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, either his Kingdom of Grace here, or Glory hereafter : both which are entail'd on those who by Faith and Baptism follow him in the Regeneration, Mat. 19. 28. and by Baptism will be saved, Mark 16. 16. For as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Gal. 3. 27. and shall obtain Remission of Sins, Acts 2. 38."*

Answer. I cannot understand how the Apostle Peter's Doctrine concerning the saving Baptism, can be rightly applied, but in an inward and spiritual Sense, as the Work of Righteousness and Sanctification in the Heart, in which Sense we take it, and not otherwise ; the which also that of the Apostle Paul's to Titus, seems very much to confirm, who directly there tells us what does not save, viz. Works of Righteousness which we have done ; and then, in Opposition to it, plainly declares what does, viz. *The washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost* : As parallel a Text to that of Peter's as, I think, is in the Scripture ; they both running in one Line, and center in the same thing, both affirming what it is not, and then what it is. By which it appears plain, they referred to the inward and spiritual Work in the Heart, and excluded outward Means, or what might be termed as Works of Righteousness (which Man only as a Creature

Creature could perform) from having any Share therein; far from setting forth, as thou sayst, not only the Benefits, but Necessity of Water-Baptism, which, at the most, can be termed but an outward visible Act, (and generally acknowledged only as a Representation or Figure of that which is really saving in its own Property, and wrought only by a divine, superior Power in the Heart) and therefore inclusive in the Apostle's meaning, as what does not save. And it seems quite opposite to his Doctrine, to take the Word *Washing* in a distinct separate Sense from Regeneration, it being only used by way of Allusion to the Extensiveness of that great Work within, and very pertinent thereto; the which is a very frequent Word to denote the cleansing quality of the Spirit by, in holy Writ; which, if restricted to an outward and carnal Sense, would quite overthrow the Spirituality of its Scope and Tendency. As to that Doctrine of our Saviour's, in *Mat.* 19. 28. concerning his Disciples following him in the Regeneration; I see no Reason to think he referred to any thing else but the inward Work of Sanctification and Redemption, which, doubtless, his Disciples had partook of in a very good Degree; because of their being intitled to those blessed excellent Immunities he was pleased to tell them they should be Partakers of, which we never read was entailed upon any, by Virtue of their coming under, and submitting to the strictest of outward Observations and Ceremonies whatsoever, they never making the Comers thereunto perfect, as appertaining to the Conscience. That in *Mark* 16. 16. I have spoken to before; as also that in *Acts* 2. 38. That in *Galat.* 3. 27. seems yet more strengthening our Doctrine, the Words *INTRO* and *PUTTING ON*, directly shewing the powerful saving Effects of that Baptism he intended, which (as have been said before) is only ascribable to that of the Holy Spirit, which that of Water is ever insufficient.

Thou sayst, "*Before thou dismishest this Subject, must answer one Objection much insisted on by all of our Persuasion, viz. That Water-Baptism is ceased; for that John's Baptism was Water-Baptism, and*

“ *his Baptism being ceased, Water-Baptism is ceased*
 “ ——— *Let it be noted, thou sayst, That there*
 “ *were three Water-Baptisms in the World at one time,*
 “ *the Jewish, St. John's, and our Saviour's. The two*
 “ *first are abolished, but the latter remains, and will*
 “ *do so, by the Promise of Christ, to the End of the*
 “ *World.*”

Answer. As the Scripture no where calls the Baptism of Christ, Water-Baptism ; but always makes a manifest Distinction between the one and the other, let us attend strictly thereto, seeing that, and not Tradition, ought to be decisive in the Case.

First take the Baptist's own Testimony, *Mat. 3. 11. I indeed baptize you with Water unto Repentance ; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire.* See also *Mark 1. 8. Luke 3. 16. John 1. 33.* The Scripture says positively, *Jesus himself baptized not, i. e. with Water, John 4. 2.* Our Saviour distinguisheth them to his Disciples after his Resurrection in these Words, *For John truly baptized with Water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many Days hence, Acts 1. 5.* And when they partook of this, is there any manner of room to suppose that Water was either used or implied ? Read *Acts 2. 3, 4. And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it sat upon each of them : and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance.* The Apostle Peter, in giving account concerning the falling of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentiles, clearly distinguishes between the two Baptisms : *As I began to speak, (says he) the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the Beginning. Then remembered I the Word of the Lord, how that he said, John baptized with Water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, Acts 11. 15, 16.* *Apollos, a Man mighty in the Scriptures, knew only the Baptism of John, whom Aquila and Priscilla instructed more perfectly in the way of God. The Apostle Paul clearly distinguishes between John's Baptism, which was always with Water, and*
 Christ's ;

Christ's ; in his Query to the Disciples at *Ephesus* : *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what were ye then baptized ? And they said, Unto John's Baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the Baptism of Repentance, saying unto the People, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his Hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them ; and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied, Acts 19. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. That also of the Apostle Peter's, which have been spoken to before, is a very clear Distinction between the two different Baptisms, 1 Pet. 3. 21. *Not the putting away the filth of the Flesh ; but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.**

From all which Passages it is very evident, Christ's Baptism was ever held a distinct and separate Baptism from Water-Baptism, both as to Matter and Substance ; and therefore our esteeming it so, is no Novelty, or our own Invention, but founded on Scripture Authority : But cannot see that thy Notion of three Water-Baptisms being in the World all at once, under those several Appellations, *viz.* the *Jews*, *John's*, and our Saviour's, is supportable by it ; the two former ceasing, in point of Obligation, when his took place.

Thou sayst, "*It will be proper here to shew you what it is that makes the Difference of Baptisms : Not the outward Matter in which they are administered ; for all outward Baptisms are Water-Baptisms, as the Word Baptism, Washing, signifies. But they differ ; first, In the Ends for which they were instituted : secondly, In the Form in which they are administered.*"

Answer. I readily agree with thee, as to the different Ends thou makes between the *Jewish* Baptisms, and our Saviour's ; but until thou canst make it appear to be such an outward ceremonious Act as theirs were, I cannot allow it to be with the same outward

Matter as washing into Water; which, I think, not only repugnant to its spiritual Nature, but also contradictory to the before-mentioned Testimonies of our Saviour, *John* the Baptist, and the Apostles, who ascribe that of Water only to *John*, and no where infers Christ's to be with the same Matter.

For thy second Observation, As to the Form in which Water-Baptisms are administered, enforces nothing of its being the more that of Christ's thereby; for there is no Scripture-Proof, that the Apostles ever made use of that Form, *In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, in their little Practice of Water-Baptism; or enjoined the Use of it afterwards. And tho they have crept in since, and been used as a Form in the Practice of Water-Baptism, to stamp the greater Authority thereon, as a necessary Consequent; because those Words are mentioned by our Lord in that Commission spoken to before, *Teach all Nations, baptizing them*, &c. that therefore that Baptism was Water-Baptism; which we think no ways the more forcible thereby: but, on good Grounds, dissent therefrom, (believing the generality of People, in this Matter, are more influenced by Tradition, and Custom, than sound Judgment) which, as we ever did, so do still esteem it most agreeable to, and consistent with the Doctrine of the Christian Religion, (as contained in the Scriptures of Truth;) and that those Expressions were only to set forth the spiritual Advantage and Prerogatives they should experience who partook of his own saving Baptism, thro' their preaching: or, as thou hast it, *being made Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones*, Ephes. 5. 30. that we might receive the Adoption of Sons; henceforth no more Servants, but Sons of God, and Heirs of Heaven.

Thou sayst, "*Christ's Baptism could not be John's Baptism; for Christ made Disciples unto himself, not to John.*"

By this thou wouldst infer, our Saviour's using Water-Baptism, and that thereby he made Disciples to himself; which I have treated upon before, and by plain Scripture shewn, that he did not practise it,

it, nor was it called his Baptism. As to *John's* decreasing, and *Christ's* increasing, must be understood of their two different Dispensations; one being under the Law, with outward Figures, Shadows, &c. the other with and by the Spirit, or the plentiful Pourings of it forth upon all Flesh, &c.

For thy Observation, That Water-Baptism did not cease with *John*, &c. I have also treated upon it before, to which refer thee.

I have now gone thro' all the argumentative Part of thy Treatise; and, according to my Sense and Judgment of the Matter in debate, have delivered my Thoughts thereupon, being fully satisfied of the Continuance of the Holy Ghost's Baptism in the manner I have already set it forth, and that it will remain so to the End of the World, and of its being sufficient to Salvation without Water-Baptism; which does not appear from Scripture, or right Reason, to be any Part thereof; any more than outward Circumcision was a Part of, or made up the Circumcision of the Heart, in the Spirit; which the Apostle's Observation thereon is worth our while to take due notice of, *Rom. 2. 28, 29. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.* Then, unanswerably, he is not a Christian, that is one outward; nor is that Baptism, that is of the Flesh: But he is a Christian, that is one inwardly; and that is Baptism, that is of the Heart, in the Spirit; whose Praise is not of Man, but of God. And the same Apostle tells the *Galatians*, *Neither Circumcision, availeth any thing,* nor Uncircumcision; but a new Creature*, *Gal. 6. 15.* So likewise may it safely be said of Water-Baptism, (being in its self no more than Circumcision was, an outward and visible Representation) that neither being baptized with Water, availeth any thing, nor being unbaptized with Water; but a new Creature.

The remaining part of thy Treatise (containing Assurances of very great Advantages and Benefits in my using thereof, and the great Destruction and Ruin which will be my Lot, if continue in the disuse of it) needs, as I think, no further Reply or Answer than what I have already given; yet cannot pass it altogether over, without making a few Remarks thereon.

First, I observe how thou wouldst insinuate, “ *That weak, short-sighted Man should pretend to be wiser than Wisdom itself, and find fault with the Institutions of our Saviour, as being too much upon the outward; and think he can and may spiritualize them finer, and make the Way shorter than he has done.*” Which I take to be directly levied at us, the People called Quakers.

Answer. We are so far from those Pretensions, or from finding fault with the Institutions of our Saviour, that I may venture to say, no sort of Christians whatever, have greater esteem for them, and press each other to the right and faithful Performance of them. But as Water-Baptism does not appear to us to be so, we therefore deny the Use of it; not daring to build our Faith on the received Notions and Opinions of others. However we are represented by our Adversaries, who have not stuck to brand us, because thereof, with being the most poisonous Sect which this Day infest the Church of Christ, &c.

Secondly, Thou asserts, “ *The Waters of Baptism are as necessary to the cleansing of our Souls, as the Waters of Jordan were to the cleansing of Naaman; and represents our Saviour using the same Words to me, as the Prophet did to him: Wash, be baptized, and be clean.*”

Answer. When I have as clear an Understanding, that Christ calls to me to be washed in outward Water, for the cleansing of my Soul from its Sins, (as Naaman had, that the Prophet bid him go wash in Jordan and be clean) I hope I shall, with all Humility and Subjection, close in therewith: But till
that

that can be made appear, I dare not run the hazard of it, being well assured, That what is not of Faith, is Sin.

Thirdly, Thy acknowledging, as if God had not tied himself so far, as not to save, if he pleases, without Baptism, *i. e.* with Water, carries a face of Charity along with it, and seems very repugnant to thy whole Discourse; wherein thou hast confined Salvation to no greater Extent than to where, and as it is administer'd, in very absolute positive Terms, (without any Reserve to the Interposition of that divine Power, whose Ways are wonderful, and past finding out;) asserting that without it, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Also the initiating Rite, by which all true Believers must enter into the Church of Christ; that it must be done, before we can have any Hope of Entrance or Admittance into the Kingdom of God. That the great Blessings of Justification and Sanctification, are first and chiefly derived in Baptism, *i. e.* with Water; and terms it as Wilfulness and Obstinacy, in those who cannot see that absolute Necessity in it; and therefore sayst, They cannot have any Grounds for Hope of Salvation by the Gospel-Covenant, (which Covenant certainly is Christ) nor can claim no Right to the Promises of the Gospel, or have any Right or Title to be called a Christian, or to reap the Benefit of Christ's Mediation and Redemption, or become a Member of Christ's Church, or Professor of Christianity, &c. All which thou ascribes to the Neglect of using Water-Baptism; which, to me, seems irreconcilable with thy above Confession concerning the Salvation of God without it: and tho thou wouldst make it so rare, uncommon, extraordinary Case, as that of the *Israelites* being supported in the Wilderness without the Staff of Bread, the common Support of Nature, and their Souls being saved without Circumcision, &c. yet will it hold good, in a general, universal manner, to all those, under what Name or Profession soever they may go, who truly fears

fears God, and work Righteousness, which, the Apostle *Peter* says, *are accepted with him*; and is indeed the whole Scope and Tendency of the Doctrine contained in sacred Writ.

Fourthly, As to thy Hint concerning a worthy Divine and an Atheist, has not any Relation to me, in that I never denied the Necessity of coming under a Baptism, *viz.* that of Christ's, in order (as not attainable without it) to know Salvation for my Soul: And am not conscious to myself (because of the Disuse of Water-Baptism) of despising, or treading under Foot, the Institution of the Son of God, or counting it a needless Thing, (as thou seems to infer, because thereof;) it not appearing, to me, such a divine and sacred Thing. And believe, the Application thou hast made concerning the severe Punishment, *viz.* Dying without Mercy, for the rejecting of *Moses's* Law, will not affect me purely for this Act.

Fifthly, Thy instancing the Purchase of an Estate in Land, whose Title would be doubtful without suing a Fine, &c. does not reach my Case; being fully persuaded, that the using of Water-Baptism will no ways enforce my Title or Claim to Salvation by Jesus Christ, whose Spiritual Baptism is alone able to perfect it, without the other.

Sixthly, Thou says, "*Nor is it against Reason; and mentions how that the Spirit of God moved at first upon the Face of the Waters to impregnate them, and make them fructify, and gave a miraculous Virtue to the Waters of Siloam and Bethesda, for the healing of the Flesh: Why should we then doubt, that the same Spirit can, and will sanctify the Waters of Baptism to the mystical washing away of Sin.*"

Answer. I am far from disputing against the Reasonableness of any thing it may please God to reveal to any as his Will and Command, who has all Power
in

in his Hand to bring to pass whatever he pleases ; which is very evidently set forth in these Instances thou hast brought : But until the like great Effects are seen and produced, in what thou calls the Waters of Baptism, (which I think nothing is more obvious than the contrary) and I am sensible God requires me to make use of them, I cannot be prevail'd upon to embrace that so high Esteem and Opinion, as thou endeavours to bring me to, of their miraculous Virtue and Effect.

Seventhly, Thy Comparison of Men managing their temporal Affairs, as forming themselves into distinct Companies and Societies, &c. seems to enforce as if the Almighty was confined to direct Rules and Methods respecting Salvation, (as Men are, who carries on their outward Affairs) and so brings in Water-Baptism a direct Rule and Consequent thereof, as being so far tied and limited to it, as not to incorporate and make Members of his Church without it ; as appears by thy following Words : “ *That until I have thus, in a publick manner, enter'd myself into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, and by the Sign or Seal of Water-Baptism be admitted into his Church, I can plead no Claim to the Promises of the Gospel, nor call myself a Christian, nor have no right nor title to that Name, &c.*”

Answer. This is not only a very unchristian-like Reflection, but what favours of rank Superstition and Idolatry, tending to lessen that Power which thou just before acknowledg'd to be infinite, and his Mercy over all his Works ; and repugnant to that Doctrine contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, which declares, that *God would have all Men to be saved, and come to the Knowledge of his Truth* ; (without limitation of coming under this, so much insisted upon, outward Ceremony and Observation) and also very contradictory to thy foregoing generous-like Assertion, That God can save as well without as with the use of it.

Eighthly, Thou would'st make me an Offender for urging my Opinion concerning the Insufficiency of outward Ordinances and Institutions, without accompany'd with a good Life ; and that those who were concern'd to put that in practice, would be saved, whether they were baptized or not with Elementary Water ; and say'st, the Case of *Cornelius* is a most flagrant Instance against that Opinion.

The which I cannot agree with : for it appears clear to my Apprehension, that *Cornelius* was in a state of Acceptance with God, before *Peter* was sent to him ; and that his being baptized with Water (if it was so) was not the means of his receiving those inestimable Advantages the Almighty bestowed upon him and the rest, they having partook thereof, before any mention was made of Water. We have many Instances in the holy Scriptures concerning the Invalidity of all outward Observations and Institutions, even in those very Days, when there is no dispute to be made of their being commanded by God to the *Jews* under the Law ; the Lord very sharply reprehending the People, by his Prophets, for dwelling too much thereupon, and neglecting the more weighty Matters within. As also our blessed Saviour himself reprov'd that Generation for the same Crimes : And likewise the Apostles, in their Epistles to the several Churches, all along endeavour to bring the Believers to the saving Power of Christ within, and not to depend upon outward Observations and Ordinances, as sufficient thereto ; styling them but as weak and beggarly Elements, not being able to make the Comers thereunto perfect, as appertaining to the Conscience.

Ninthly, Thou seems to infer, as tho my Belief of being baptized with the Spirit, and living in upright Conversation, will not be of any profit and advantage ; and say'st, " That if my evil Thoughts, idle Words, and corrupt Deeds, were laid before me, as they are register'd in God's Book, I should behold such a dark Scene as would make me tremble, and cause
" you

" you to own the necessity of a Mediator and Redeemer,
 " to plead and atone for you."

Answer. It appears to me that the very Belief and experimental Knowledge of the Baptism of the Spirit, is a sufficient Testimony of owning the necessity of a Mediator and Redeemer, and of the benefit of his gracious Intercession and Atonement; and I am firmly persuaded, concerning the Sufficiency thereof, to remove that dark Scene occasioned by my evil Thoughts, idle Words, and corrupt Deeds, which I believe Water-Baptism can never be able to perfect, tho thou lays it down so essentially binding and obligatory, as that without it there is no reaping the Benefits of Christ's Mediation and Redemption, or a being either ingrafted into his Church, or becoming an outward Member in it, or Professor of Christianity: or that the Belief in the Heart unto Righteousness, or outward Confession with the Mouth unto Salvation, cannot be available but by that Means, &c. Which is such uncharitable unchristian-like Doctrine, that, in my Opinion, shows the Propagators thereof very great Strangers to the Nature of true Christianity; and gives great Advantages to the most wicked and prophane, to live and continue in the Contempt thereof, &c.

*Tenthly, " Thou now turns the comfortable side,
 " (as thou terms it) and shew the Benefits and Advant-
 " vantage may be reaped in my receiving Water-Bap-
 " tism above numbers of People round about me;
 " which thou hinges on such Conditions, as with me
 " carries no such convincing Proofs and Demonstra-
 " tions, that that outward Observation will, in any
 " wise, perfect what thou promises will be conveyed to
 " me thereby, viz. the Remission of my Sins from my
 " Youth, &c."*

Altho, I confess, those Conditions are what I desire to be in the practice of, which I am sensible will not fail to be done, as there is a true dwelling continually in the Fear of God, and keeping his Law, which is writ in the Heart, and that nothing but a divine Power can bring unto, a manifestation or measure of which

is given to every one to profit withal ; which great and good End I hope to attain to, without the use of Water-Baptism ; desiring to be joined to that Church and People who are more concerned for the practical Part and Substance of Christianity than to rely upon outward Shadows and Ceremonies, which is very visible too too many have done, and screw them up to Articles of Religion, and place Salvation upon them : a sufficient Proof whereof thy whole Treatise is a manifest Instance.

As to thy last Observation, “ *concerning the prejudice of Education, which thou say'st thou art sensible I suffer very much under ; and so concludes, that an ill-grounded Opinion influences me against Reason and Scripture,*” I shall make this Reply to : That how far soever that has made any Impression upon me, I find it agreeable both to Reason and Scripture, which have not had that effect as to make me slight either ; but, like the *Bereans*, I have searched the Scriptures concerning the Affair now in Controversy between us ; and, as it appears to my Understanding, I have already declared. As to mentioning *Paul's* being my Pattern, who gloried in his Conversion from Judaism to Christianity, I heartily wish I may come to a degree of Knowledge like as he did, who testified by what Means he attained thereto, *viz.* by the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, which made him free from the Law of Sin and Death ; before which he groaned (tho subject to outward Ordinances and Institutions) under the load of Sin and Death : Which shows plainly, that all his outward Performances could never do that great Work ; and until People come to the same Power within, they will ever lie under the same great weight and load which he cried out of, as a wretched miserable Creature, wanting to be released and freed therefrom : The which I am sensible is the Case of many, who applying to some Persons, as thinking them able to counsel what would be the most proper and direct Means to gain relief, who building them up with the Performances of these outward Observations,

servations, and not directing them to the saving Baptism of Christ within, carries many such poor Souls to Destruction, in a golden Dream of Salvation.

And therefore, as I cannot find any Incumbency on me (from either a secret Impulse in my own Heart, or any Doctrine laid down by our Saviour, or his Apostles, injoining me to it) to use Water-Baptism, I dare not go contrary to my own Sense and Judgment concerning it, nor example others in that which I believe will not initle either myself or them any more to true Membership in Christ's Church, than what may be attained to by Faith in him without it ; I shall therefore conclude with the *' Words of Burnet to Law, who, after he had said*
' it was far from him, or from any Christian, to judge
' or condemn those who cannot satisfy themselves that Christ
' has required the Continuance of those outward Actions
' (meaning Water-Baptism, and that called the Lord's
' Supper) which he never laid any stress upon, but
' as Signs of inward good Dispositions ; he then shows
' him the reason thereof : I dare the less do this (says he)
' when I observe what plain Difference our Saviour him-
*' self has placed between the Thing, and the Sign of it *.—*
' And farther, when I consider how small a weight
' is laid on these two Ceremonies of his own Institu-
' tion (says he) in the Gospel, in comparison of the
' great weight which is there laid on Matters of quite
' another nature ; how often the one is spoken of, and
' insisted upon, and how seldom the other : Tho I con-
' fess to those who believe them to have been Appoint-
' ments of Christ, design'd to continue to the end of
' the World, they become necessary ; insomuch as all
' Obedience to Christ is necessary to the Salvation of
' Christians, but not for any thing in the Ceremonies
' themselves.'

I hope I may, without offence, use thy own Expressions to me ; weigh the Contents with a good Disposition and humble Mind, free from Prejudice or Partiality : And let the same Temper and Frame of Spirit abound in thee, as the above-mentioned Person declared

* Mark 16. 16.

did in him towards those who could not satisfy themselves that those outward Actions was to be continued thro' an Injunction from Christ; which, as it is my Case, so I freely confess with him, to those who believe them to have been Appointments of Christ, design'd to continue to the end of the World, they become necessary. Which is the Doctrine generally maintained and asserted amongst us.

I am thy Christian Friend.

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